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ROUTINE

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5. (C) NEA - AFGHAN INSURGENTS THREATEN TARAKI REGIME
(GDS 7/16/85)

{C} AFGHANISTAN'S ESCALATING INSURGENCY HAS EXPANDED FROM ISOLATED UPRISINGS IN EASTERN TRIBAL AREAS LAST FALL TO A MORE WIDESPREAD, THOUGH STILL UNCOORDINATED REBELLION AGAINST THE TARAKI/AMIN REGIME (DRA). REBELS CONTROL OVER HALF OF THE COUNTRY WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONCENTRATED ON RETAINING MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS, IMPORTANT ROADS AND COMMUNICATIONS LINKS, THE BEST AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS AND KEY MILITARY OUTPOSTS.

{C} THE DRA HAS BEEN ABLE TO HOLD ON BECAUSE OF CONTINUING MILITARY SUPPORT, WELL-ORGANIZED AND DEDICATED PARTY CADRE, AND SUBSTANTIAL MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET UNION. THE INSURGENTS HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY AGREEING UPON LEADERSHIP, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY AND HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO COORDINATE THE DISPARATE ANTI-REGIME ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE OCCURRING. REBEL GROUPS BASED IN PAKISTAN CONTROL VERY LITTLE OF WHAT GOES ON WITHIN AFGHANISTAN AND HAVE SPENT A LARGE PORTION OF THEIR ENERGIES JOCKEYING FOR POSITION WITH RESPECT TO EACH OTHER AND POTENTIAL FOREIGN SUPPORTERS.

{C} AS THE INSURGENCY WEARS ON ATTRITION WILL AFFECT BOTH SIDES. THERE ARE ALREADY SIGNS THAT MILITARY LOYALTY TO THE REGIME IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY TENUOUS AS INDIVIDUALS AND EVEN SMALL UNITS DESERT OR DEFECT TO THE REBELS. THE REGIME'S MANPOWER RESERVES ARE GRADUALLY BEING ERODED AT THE SAME TIME THAT DOUBTS ARE GROWING THAT THE TARAKI/AMIN LEADERSHIP CAN SEE THEIR REVOLUTION THROUGH. BUT THE REBELS ARE ALSO SUFFERING HEAVY CASUALTIES AND, SO FAR, LACK SIGNIFICANT EXTERNAL HELP.

{C} OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS, THERE HAVE BEEN FREQUENT AND CONTINUING SIGNALS THAT THE SOVIETS ALSO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DRA'S ABILITY TO QUELL THE INSURGENCY. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT MOSCOW WOULD LIKE TO SEE TARAKI AND AMIN BROADEN THEIR BASE OF SUPPORT, BUT A MOVEMENT TOWARD POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WILL NOT COME EASILY IN THE CURRENT VIOLENT ATMOSPHERE. EFFORTS MAY BE MADE IN THIS DIRECTION, BUT THE PROGNOSIS FOR AFGHANISTAN FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE IS A CONTINUING INSURGENCY WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF VIOLENCE--PROBABLY INCLUDING ANTI-DRA TERRORIST ACTIONS. THE OUTCOME REMAINS UNCLEAR.

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